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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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October 30, 1980

Dear Carl:

Although there are many other issues before us, I wanted you to know that we have not ignored our continuing concerns in the Republic of Korea. Thank you for your thoughtful letter on this subject and for enclosing the Kwangju report prepared by the United Presbyterian Church.

The episode in the southwestern city of Kwangju in mid-May was precipitated by the brutal and undisciplined behavior of the Army Special Forces unit after the clamp-down of martial law on May 17. Our Bureau of East Asian Affairs has met with one of the two doctors who went to Kwangju on behalf of the Presbyterian Church, and we have benefited from their knowledge and insights. Our latest information is that the emotions engendered in that region are still considerably unreconciled.

The real outlines and direction of the political institutions to be formed under the new constitution will not be clear until after the elections next spring. Only then will we know whether majority aspirations will be met in that society.

Our influence will continue to be used to press Korean leaders into giving maximum political content to the new institutions and into alleviating the recent tendencies toward arbitrary treatment of those who dissent.

We continue to be concerned about the trial of Kim Dae Jung and his associates. The first appellate trial is just beginning, and further judicial appeals and executive reviews are pending. We estimate the case will not be

The Honorable
Carl Levin,
United States Senate.

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resolved before December. I have ensured that there is no misunderstanding by the Korean leadership of the grave consequences that execution of such a figure would have for U.S.-Korean relations. The Japanese Government has made similar views known.

Although the trial issue is complex and volatile, we are working quietly to maximize our effective communication on this problem and to avoid the kind of public pressures which can arouse strong nationalistic reaction and make it more difficult for President Chun to decide this issue in broader perspectives.

As this matter approaches President Chun's desk in late November, you may wish to communicate with the Korean Ambassador or even with Chun himself to express your own views.

With warm best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Edmund S. Muskie

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Our concern over the trial of Kim Dae Jung and his associates continues and has by no means been diminished despite our relatively quiet public posture in recent weeks. The first appellate trial is just beginning, and further judicial appeals and executive reviews are pending. Our estimate is that this case will not be finally resolved before December. I have ensured that there is no misunderstanding by the Korean leadership of the grave consequences that execution of such a figure would have for U.S. - Korean relations and for our ability to protect our strong mutual interests in many fields. The Japanese Government has made similar views known.

The trial issue remains a complex one within Korea at this juncture, and we are working quietly both to maximize our effective communication on this problem and to avoid the kind of public pressures which can arouse strong nationalistic reaction and make it more difficult for President Chun to decide this issue in broader perspectives if the current severe sentence survives judicial review and reaches his desk for final decision. As this matter approaches President Chun's desk in the latter part of November you may wish to communicate with the Korean Ambassador or even with Chun himself to convey your own strong hope that commutation or adjustment in the verdict will be made and to stress the importance to those of you on the Hill that such a blight not interfere with the important continuation of the mutual relationships between our governments and peoples.

WITH WARM BEST WISHES, I AM

Sincerely,

President

Edmund S. Muskie